

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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R 130922Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4946

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 3549

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: MCA CONGRESS

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 3422; B. KUALA LUMPUR 3484

1. SUMMARY: MCA CONGRESS AUG 11-12 WAS ANICLIMATIC IN
VIEW ITS COMPLETE DOMINATION BY OLD GUARD FACTION AND
FAILURE OF MEANINGFUL CHALLENGE BY "YOUNG TURKS".
THERE NO RPT NO DEMONSTRATIONS OR OTHER
DISORDERLY CONDUCT BUT KINGTON LOO AND SEVERAL OTHER
REFORMERS STAGED MINI-WALKOUT. IN ELECTIONS, OLD GUARD
SLATE (REF A) RETURNED AS EXPECTED BUT SEVERAL REFORMERS
WERE NAMED TO CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE. IN CONCILIATORY
MOVE, TAN SIEW SIN "FORGAVE" REFORMERS AND ANNOUNCED
FORMATION OF NEW COMMITTEE WHICH WILL TOUR COUNTRY TO
BUILD UP MASS SUPPORT FOR PARTY. END SUMMARY.

2. KEYNOTE SPEECHES AUG 11 BY PM RAZAK AND MCA PRESIDENT
TAN SIEW SIN WERE LARGELY ANODYNE IN SEEKING AVOID
CONFRONTATION AMONG VARIOUS MCA FACTIONS. PM RAZAK
DECLARED IN CLEAR WARNING TO EXTREMISTS IN BOTH CHINESE
AND MALAY COMMUNITIES THAT CHAUVINISM HAS NO PLACE IN
MALAYSIAN POLITICS; HE ALSO TOLD MCA LEADERSHIP NOT TO
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IGNORE "WINDS OF CHANGE" AND TO SET EXAMPLE OF "HONEST

AND SINCERE SERVICE TO PEOPLE". TAN SIEW SIN DELIVERED WHAT AMOUNTED TO APOLOGY FOR SCHISMS WITHIN PARTY BUT MAITAINED THAT MCA INFLUENCE IN GOVT UPHELD BY QUIET NEGOTIATION AND COMPROMISE. AT CLOSE OF CONGRESS, SIEW SIN OFFERED WEAK OLIVE BRANCH TO REFORMERS IN SAYING THEY NOT ALL BAD; HE ALSO OFFERED TO BE "BROADMINDED" AND SIAD THAT MCA WOULD TAKE BACK EXPELLEES WHO "MISLED" BY REBEL ELEMENTS. SPECIAL COMMITTEE, ACCORDING SIEW SIN, WILL BE SET UP TO TOUR COUNTRY TO PROMOTE MASS SUPPORT FOR MCA.

3. IN FEW DAYS PRECEDING CONGRESS, THERE WERE NUMEROUS REPORTS THAT SIEW SIN HAD THREATENED RESIGN AS FINANCE MIN AND POSSIBLY WITHDRAW MCA FROM ALLIANCE BECAUSE HE NOT GIVEN DEPUTY PRIMIN POST WHICH SLATED TO TO HUSSEIN ONN (REF B). SIEW SIN REPORTEDLY BACKED DOWN AFTER PM RAZAK FIRMLY TOLD HIM THAT UMNO WOULD NOT ALLOW DEPUTY POST TO GO TO NON-MALAY. ACCORDING INFROMED SOUCES, PM RAZAK PROMISED "REVIEW SITUATION" RE ADDITIONAL DEPUTY POST IN FUTURE.

4. ELECTIONS TO MCA LEADERSHIP POSTS WERE PREDICTABLE PER REF A AND SEVERAL REFORMERS (BUT NO "NAME" PERSONALITIES) WERE GIVEN SEATS ON CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE. COMPOSTION OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE NOW GIVES EDGE TO SIEW SIN SUPPORTERS BUT REFORM AND MIDDLE GROUND ELEMENTS ALSO INCLUDED. IN ONLY FORMAL PROTEST BY "YOUNG TURKS", KINGTON LOO (HEAD OF NEW "MCA REFORMATION MOVEMENT NATIONAL COMMITTEE" WHICH ESTABLISHED OUTSIDE PARTY) AND SEVERAL SUPPORTERS WALKED OUT OF CONGRESS, OBJECTING TO "STACKED ELECTIONS. INFORMED SOURCES INDICATE LOO'S MCA REFORMATION RUMP GROUP INCLUDES LIM KENG YAIK, ALBERT MA AND TOH CHEE CHEONG; REFORMIST LEADERS ALEX LEE AND TAN TIONG HONG ARE REPORTEDLY REMAINING ALOOF FROM THIS NEW EFFORT FOR TIME BEING. MICHAEL CHEN AND LEW SIP HON HAVE APPARENTLY WITHDRAWN FROM ALL FACTIONS (THOUGH THEY REMAIN ORDINARY MEMBERS OF MCA) AT BEHEST OF PM RAZAK. CONGRESS ALSO CALLED UPON LIM KENG YAIK TO RESIGN FROM SENATE SEAT WHICH HE STILL HOLDS ALTHOUGH NO LONGER SPECIAL FUNCTIONS MIN.

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TM COMMENT: STRUGGLE FRO MCA CONTOL SEEMS RESOLVED FOR PRESENT BUT TAN SIEW SIN STILL PRESIDES OVER DEEPLY DIVIDED PARTY. MOREOVER, IT DOUBTFUL WHETHER SIEW SIN IS ABLE OR INCLINED HEAL SPLITS AND, AS RESULT OF KINGTON LOO'S ATTEMPT ESTABLISH FORMAL RUMP GROUP, CHASM BETWEEN FACTIONS MAY ACTUALL WIDEN. IN TERMS OF RELATIONS WITHIN ALLIANCE, SIEW SIN IS CLEARLY DEALING FROM POSITION

OF WEAKNESS, WHICH MADE HIS DEMAND FOR DEPUTY PMSHIP ALL
THE MORE SURPRISING; TO MANY, SIEW SIN IS NOW CONSIDERED
DISTINCT POLITICAL LIABILITY TO RAZAK GOVT. CERTAINLY,
MCA LEADERSHP CRISIS OF PAST FEW MONTHS HAS DONE NOTHING
TO BOOST MCA'S CREDIBILITY IN CHINESE COMMUNITY AS WHOLE.
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